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Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882) was the son of a country doctor. He was educated to be a priest and a physician but characterizing medicine to be a "beastly profession" he gave it up to become a naturalist. Although he received no salary he became the drinking companion of the captain of the ship 'Beagle' when he was 22 years old.

Through his observations during the course of his voyages to distant shores and islands, he found the creationist explanation unsatisfactory and developed his own ideas on the mechanism of evolution. He put forward his theory of natural selection in his book 'The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life' (1859), the first edition of which was sold out on the first day. Although the actual ideas in the book had evolved in Darwin's mind way back in 1835, it was only in 1858 when he was forced to publish a paper together with A R Wallace, who had developed almost the same views independently, that his theory was broadcast to the world — a world in which almost nothing was known about inheritance, where people believed that only four major classes of animals existed and that all of it was made by God!

Darwin's theory of natural selection has so transformed our world that it tends to foreshadow his many other remarkable contributions. He has written 11 books whose topics range from fossils to domestic animals and coral reefs to fertilization in plants. In this list is a special volume 'The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex' almost as large as 'The Origin of Species'. It proposed two ideas: first it made a strong and clear case for the "monkey question" which claims that humans have descended from apes and second that the choice exercised by females during mate selection tends to produce novel forms of evolution that might even run counter to natural selection.

Darwin thought that adaptability to the environment is the key to success for every organism in the world. Applying this same rule to him, it is indeed remarkable that he has survived this long in the technocratic world of today.